

## **Northern Region Essay Winner**

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Helping people is something that comes effortlessly to me. If I had to come up with a list of why I help people, it would consist of these five things: I love knowing that I made someone's day a little bit better; I believe that kindness is contagious; thinking about helping people makes me smile; I know how it feels to feel helpless and down and I don't want anyone else to feel that way; and lastly, I want to make a difference in the world, and helping people is my contribution to that cause.

One of my favorite things to do is work with kids, and I have done this by joining the Best Buddies club, which is working with handicapped kids, and taking the elective Peer Helping, which is when I go to elementary schools and I have a buddy assigned to me. My cousin has severe autism, so I feel a personal connection with the kids in the Best Buddies program. I have the opportunity to work with these kids and when I see their faces light up, I just know that I am making a difference; even if it's something little like helping them color or something big like helping them with personal issues. I like to believe I'm creating a positive impact.

One of the buddies I've been assigned to is named Isaiah and at first he didn't talk, but now every time I pick him up from his classroom, he gets the biggest grin on his face and jumps up to hug me and won't stop talking to me about his day and his family, and I couldn't be happier.

I've suffered from depression and anxiety for the last four years so I know what it's like to feel helpless. If I can be a confidant or a helping hand to anyone so that they don't have to feel that despair, I know I have accomplished an incredible feat. By helping someone and showing compassion toward them, it has a lasting effect on that person and will create a domino effect, causing them to show that same compassion to another person and so on.

I believe Thomas Cannon would have agreed with my list because not only do I help people, but I continue to pass along my compassion for helping others through my actions, which Thomas Cannon's legacy has done well.